

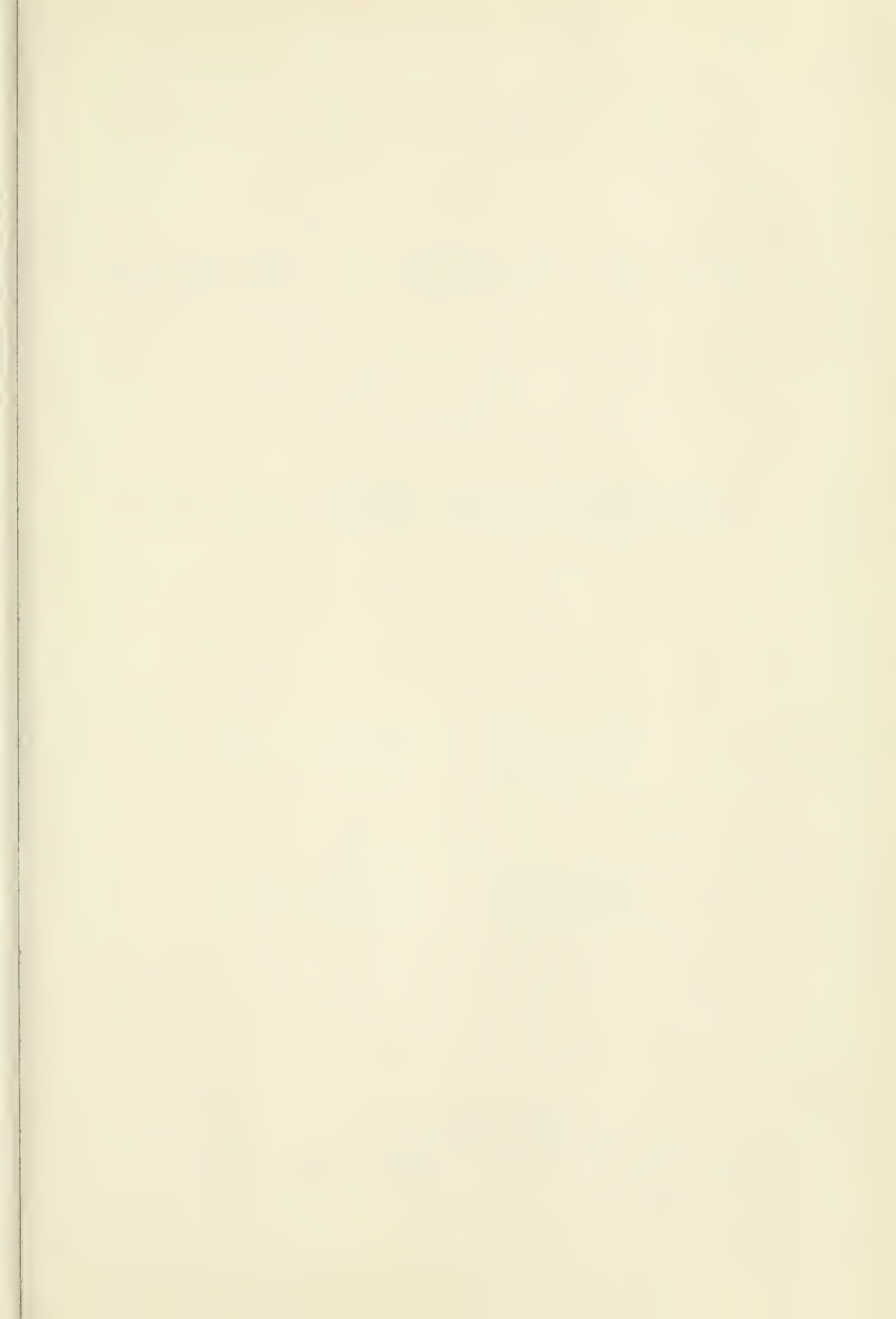
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No. 97







BULLETIN

OF THE

Newport Historical Society

Number ninety-seven

NEWPORT, R. I.

July, 1936

ANNUAL MEETING NUMBER

MAWDSLEY HOUSE

WRITTEN BY

MISS MAUD L. STEVENS

REPORTS OF PRESIDENT, SECRETARY,
TREASURER, AND CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

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No. 97



LLOYD M. MAYER
1850-1936

WHEREAS, Lloyd M. Mayer, for nineteen years Recording Secretary, Librarian, and Assistant Treasurer of the Newport Historical Society, departed this life on Friday, April tenth, 1936;

AND WHEREAS, his services to the Newport Historical Society during that period were of the most devoted nature, given with no thought of self up to the very day of his death;

AND WHEREAS, his devotion to the interests of the Society, and his constant desire to be of help to all who consulted its records and Library, endeared him to all who knew him;

AND WHEREAS, his cheerful fortitude in his recent illness won him an even greater measure of affection than he had before received;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, his colleagues on the Board of Directors of the Newport Historical Society, and the members at large, in our desire to bear witness to our sorrow in his passing, do hereby testify to our affection and love for him, and our desire to continue to follow in his footsteps in the policies of the Society;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we spread upon the record of the Society our sense of irreparable loss, and transmit to the members of his family our most sincere and heartfelt sympathy in their great affliction, and pray for them the comfort and solace of Almighty God.

GIVEN UNDER THE SEAL OF THE SOCIETY, THIS
TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MAY, 1936.

For the Society;

STEPHEN B. LUCE,
President.

WHEREAS, on Saturday, March seventh, 1936, Mrs. C. L. F. Robinson, for many years a Director of the Newport Historical Society, died at her home in Hartford, Connecticut;

AND WHEREAS, she was always a faithful attendant at its meetings, and most interested in its activities, having been present at the very last meeting of the Board before her death;

AND WHEREAS, her advice and suggestions at these meetings were always eagerly sought for and freely given, winning for her the respect and affection of her colleagues on the Board, and of the membership of the Society at large;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newport Historical Society, at its Annual Meeting, testify to the affection in which she was held, and to its own sense of great loss;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent records of the Society, and a copy thereof sent to the bereaved family.

GIVEN UNDER THE SEAL OF THE SOCIETY, THIS
TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MAY, 1936.

For the Society:

STEPHEN B. LUCE,

President.

WHEREAS, That by the death of Jonas Bergner, on Saturday, Jan. 11th last, this Society has suffered a deep and irreparable loss,

WHEREAS, Mr. Bergner for the past thirty-nine years has been connected with this Society, as a member and Director, and has always been interested in the history and preservation of Newport and its antiquities, be it

RESOLVED, That we tender to the relatives of the deceased our fullest sympathy in the bereavement they have sustained, and that a copy of these resolutions be sent to them, and also printed in the publication of our Society.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Your President herewith submits his Annual Report on the condition of the Society.

This has been a sad year for our Society. The hand of Death has been active in taking from us some of our most valued members. Elsewhere a list of those who have left us will be read; and you will then be asked to rise and pay a tribute of respectful silence to their memory. But I cannot and would not avoid saying a few words about three of our Directors who have passed to their reward.

In January, the death of Mr. Jonas Bergner left his colleagues on the Board of Directors stunned at a loss which can never be adequately filled. In point of service he was the senior member of the Board. No words of mine can do justice to his profound learning, or to his generosity in sharing his knowledge with all who asked his help and counsel. In all New England there was nobody who knew so well the old houses, and their methods of construction, and he was consulted as an authority far and wide. What he knew of Newport was inexhaustible, and he was without a peer among us. He had the modesty and sterling manliness of the true scholar, and a fine courtesy that endeared him to all who knew him. We mourn his loss, and he will never be forgotten by those who knew him and had the priceless gift of his friendship. Your Directors took a painful pleasure in attending his funeral, and Resolutions were adopted by them, and by the members at their February meeting, testifying to the affection in which he was held.

In March, we were again thrown into mourning by the passing of another Director, Mrs. C. L. F. Robinson. She had been for many years a member of the Board of Directors, and had been most faithful at its meetings, having been present at the very last meeting before her death. She was a most generous contributor to the Society's activities, and her advice and help were most eagerly sought for and freely given. You will be asked to endorse the Resolutions

which were adopted by the Board of Directors at their March meeting.

But the greatest blow which has fallen to the Society during the year was the death, on Friday, April tenth, of our faithful Secretary, Librarian, and Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Lloyd M. Mayer. Mr. Mayer's health had been so poor since last autumn that at the March meeting of the Board he had submitted his resignation from his offices; and your Board had elected him, subject to your confirmation today, to Honorary Membership in its body. It is difficult to speak of Mr. Mayer without emotion. For nearly twenty years he had been the guiding spirit among us; and for many it will be hard to imagine these rooms without his constant and devoted presence. It is not too much to say that the Society was his life; and nobody could have served us more loyally or disinterestedly than he. No salary that we could have paid him would have adequately compensated him for all that he has done for us. To his bereaved widow and children our hearts go out in deepest and most affectionate sympathy, and we can only rejoice that he was in full possession of all his faculties up to the end, and that when the end came, it was without pain or struggle. Resolutions have been prepared, which I shall ask you to adopt, to be sent to his family and spread upon our records, to testify to the love in which we had held him. His memory will ever be cherished by all who knew him, and here in the Society he will not be forgotten.

The King is dead—Long live the *Queen*! For in Mr. Mayer's place we are most fortunate in being able to welcome back home to Newport his predecessor, Miss Edith May Tilley. She is so well known to you all that any words of mine will be superfluous. We are indeed blessed that she has consented to leave her most attractive life in the city of Boston, and return here, where she had such a vital part in the life and development of the Society. We are glad that she is to read the paper of this afternoon as her Inaugural Address, and we feel sure that under her guidance the Society will have a new lease of life and happiness. I need not bespeak for her your heartiest support; you all know her well, and will, I am sure, stand behind her in all her plans for our continued welfare.

Your Directors have held regular stated meetings in

July, September, November, January, March, and today, just before this Annual Meeting. At these meetings routine business was carried on, and we are pleased to report that the affairs of the Society are in excellent condition. We have had some changes to report. Mrs. Charles C. Gardner has resigned as Chairman of the Library Committee, and in her place Miss Ruth B. Franklin consented to serve. Miss Franklin has effected many desirable improvements in making the information of the Society easily accessible; and we point with pride to our new filing cabinet in the outer office, which is largely due to her and Mrs. Gardner's insistence. This involved some expense, but has been abundantly justified by the facility with which our card references can now be kept and consulted.

Our quarterly meetings have been well attended, and have produced papers of value. In August, Mrs. Harrison S. Morris read a fine paper on "A TRIP ACROSS THE BAY" describing the early days of Jamestown as a summer resort. At the November meeting, Miss Ruth B. Franklin gave a most delightful and scholarly paper on "OLD SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS" which was most important in the reconstruction of our early life in Newport. In February, Mr. King Covell resumed his study of "STEAMBOATS ON NARRAGANSETT BAY" illustrated by photographs, taken largely by himself, of the boats which have been so familiar to most of us in our harbor at different times. And now today we have Miss Tilley, who is to tell us all about our beautiful Claggett clock, and the man who made it.

Three BULLETINS have been published during the year just passed. The first contained the important and scholarly article by our good friend and fellow-member, Rabbi Gutstein, on "THE TOURO FAMILY IN NEWPORT"—a paper that has been very favorably received, not merely here, but in many other parts of the country as well. The next number had the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting, with the reports of officers, and the delightful paper by our most loyal and genial member, Mr. Leander K. Carr, on "GATHERING NEWS IN THE NINETIES" while the last number to appear has the papers by Mrs. Morris and Miss Franklin, mentioned above.

Your Library and Museum Committees have been func-

tioning faithfully, and will submit their own reports; but at the risk of stealing a little of their thunder, I must mention two very important gifts we have received, one of which will properly belong to the Library, the other to the Museum. From the Estate of the late Jonas Bergner we have been given the entire collection of negatives of Newport houses, which our devoted friend had made. It has been very much on our minds to start a collection of photographs of our old houses, and this will be of the most inestimable value to future research workers in local antiquities, and in the Colonial field. We cannot be too grateful for it.

Our other gift which I should like to mention here comes from the Hon. Perry Belmont. He has given us one half of the service of silver presented to his ancestor, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, by the Merchants of New York City, on his successful return from the famous expedition to Japan. The other half of this service has been presented to the New York Historical Society, so that it has been divided between Commodore Perry's home, and the home of the donors. We feel especially indebted to Mr. Belmont for his generosity in making us the repository of this important silver, and assure him that it will always be kept sacred here. To me it strikes a very personal note; for my Grandfather, Admiral Luce, was a midshipman on the flagship of Commodore James Biddle, who went to Japan in 1846, eight years before Perry, on a similar mission, which was unsuccessful. But Perry's expedition was in a sense the direct result of the failure of that of Biddle, of whose personnel my grandfather was the last survivor when he died.

Finally, in a few words I must give my most heartfelt thanks to the Board of Directors, and to the staff of the Society, for their loyalty and co-operation during a most difficult year. No President could desire a more active and devoted Board. A special word should be said for the staff. In Mrs. Minsengerber and Mrs. Johnsson we are indeed fortunate in having two workers whose courtesy and desire to help are most noteworthy. To Mrs. Johnsson on her recent marriage our most hearty felicitations are due.

Now for a word about myself, if you will bear with me for a moment. When I began this report as "Your President" I meant exactly that. I am *your* President; when, in your opinion, I cease to be that, let no consideration for my

feelings deter you from selecting someone else. I shall be the first to give him or her my most sincere support. My only desire is to serve you. I have little or no personal ambition, except to do my job to your satisfaction. I am conscious (how could I help but be?) of many shortcomings; but I want you to know that self does not enter into my attitude towards the Society. And my ambition for the Society is to increase its usefulness to the community; to make it a power for good; and to hope that you will feel that it is your home, just as much as the roofs over your heads. I want you to feel that you can use it as a meeting place, and that you will always be welcome, as you would at a Club, or the house of a friend. It ought to be a place "where the young men shall see visions, and the old men dream dreams"—and I use "men" as a generic, not a selective, term. So let me bespeak for the Society a hope that as the years go on, you will use the Society more and more, in the assurance that you and your friends will be welcome to its rooms; that thereby we can make it a real power and centre in our beloved city.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed) STEPHEN B. LUCE,

President.

DECEASED MEMBERS

Bergner, Jonas, Jan. 11, 1936
Brayton, Miss Elizabeth H., Sept. 8, 1935
Bull, Mrs. Charles M., Jan 1, 1936
Bull, Miss Phoebe C., Jan 19, 1936
Corbin, Mrs. Richard W., Jan 12, 1936
Downing, Miss Harriet S., Sept. 30, 1935
Engs, Miss Elizabeth, Nov. 6, 1935
Glyn, Mrs. William E., March 22, 1936
Mayer, Lloyd M., April 10, 1936
Norman, Mrs. Guy, Oct. 27, 1935
Preston, Howard W., Jan. 1936
Robinson, Mrs. C. L. F., March 7, 1936
Seabury, John C., Dec. 8, 1935
Sherman, Mrs. B. B. H., Nov. 4, 1935
Williams, Charles P., Aug 27, 1935.

TREASURER'S REPORT

May 1, 1935—April 30, 1936.

Total Balance in bank amounting to \$1090.15, and all bills paid; Balance in Book Fund \$134.38.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the 1935 Annual Meeting there have been three regular meetings and five Directors' meetings.

It is interesting to note that each year, more and more school children visit this building either on a sightseeing tour or in quest of data for their history classes. Classes from the following schools have visited here:—Rogers High School, Coggeshall, Mumford, Carey and Lenthal Schools, and a Jamestown school.

Other visitors have been one group of Sea Scouts, young women from a Jamestown camp, and a group from the Rhode Island College of Education.

There have been two recitals, and meetings of the Tuberculosis Association, Improvement Association, Current Topics Club, Family Welfare, Tercentenary Committee, and services of the 7th Day Baptists, have been held here.

292 people have come in for genealogy, and material on boats, histories, costumes, furniture, houses, china, etc. 381 letters have been written in answer to queries.

The Society has also been of assistance to those working on Tercentenary Committees.

Altogether there have been 3866 visitors, which is an increase of 1174 over last year.

There have been many pleasing experiences with the visitors, and the one that seems to stand out, is, that last fall a member of the Mahogany Association of Chicago wrote asking what mahogany furniture the Society had in its possession. He was told about some of the pieces, and

he came to see for himself. He passed them all by, except one, and this one he stood and looked at with great interest. It was the wardrobe, of Santo Domingo mahogany, which is in the front office. On one of the door panels is a distinct "plum pudding" pattern, which he said he had never, in his whole experience in dealing in mahogany, seen in such a fine piece of solid mahogany. Although everyone had admired and enjoyed looking at this wardrobe, he went away, leaving us with the renewed feeling that the Society has many wonderful and priceless things in its possession to be proud of.

Respectfully submitted,

ANNIE B. MINSENBERGER,

Secretary, Pro Tem.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

1935—1936

During the past year the Library has received 186 books and pamphlets; by purchase 91, by gift 54, by exchange 54. 40 volumes have been bound and 5 rebound.

The exchanges are, for the most part, the bulletins and publications of Historical Societies and Libraries. The purchased books include:

New biographies of Roger Williams, Rochambeau, Oliver Hazard Perry, and Matthew Calbraith Perry
17 volumes of Massachusetts soldiers and sailors of the Revolutionary war

A complete set (47) of the pamphlets issued by the Yale press for the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut

Genealogies of the Arnold and Kenyon families

Several works on antiquities, old glass, clocks, etc.

The Library has been used for reference and research by 89 persons, by many school children seeking material for historical compositions, and Mr. Robson's high school class in Newport history. The assistants in the office have also provided material for the writers of the Newport guide, a W. P. A. project.

One more stack has been added in the Library proper. In the small office, a new card catalogue case of 60 drawers has been installed and the index cards transferred to this from the pasteboard cases and boxes in which they were formerly kept. These cards refer chiefly to newspaper articles, periodicals, and scrapbook material kept in the vaults, and thus supplement the catalogue in the regular Library.

The duplicate books and pamphlets stored in the small office have been carefully looked over and, by vote of the Board of Directors, 25 complete volumes of the N. E. Historical and Genealogical Register were given to the Jamestown Historical Society, and 15 pamphlets to the Rogers High School for use in the newly organized class in Newport History.

The committee has followed the policy of former years—to purchase books especially useful for genealogical research and for the study of Newport and Rhode Island history and antiquities, and not to duplicate the more general and popular works on history and antiquities which can be found in the Redwood Library.

Respectfully submitted,

RUTH B. FRANKLIN,

Chairman of Library Committee.

REPORT OF WANTON-LYMAN-HAZARD HOUSE

MAY 26, 1936

Last fall some grading was done at the rear of the House with the object of making the cellar drier. This appears to have accomplished its purpose.

As the result of an appeal for funds earlier in the spring enough money was raised to pay for painting the House and the fences on Broadway and Stone streets and for the erection of a picket fence around the small yard at the corner of Broadway and Stone streets.

The trees have been trimmed and the garden planted. The Newport Garden Association has kindly promised to replace some of the small box plants which were killed by the severe weather of a recent winter and to spray the existing box borders.

Additions to the furnishings of the House include a china cabinet and a secretary-desk, the latter loaned by a member of the family. (Hazard) This piece was removed from the House before the restoration.

Gifts of a number of smaller articles have been received. Antique Delft plate—Mrs. J. J. Peckham, from the Townsend family.

Lowestoft saucer and octagonal plate from Mr. Ralph Sullivan.

Foot-warmer—Miss Anna F. Hunter

Early accordion—Miss Lillian Pearson.

Two old carpet bags and infants' dresses from Mr. Thomas G. Hazard.

Ruffled shirt and infant's cap and dresses from Miss Elizabeth L. Clark.

White woven bed spread from Miss Mary Lee Mann.

Miniature arm-chair from Mrs. Harry Manuel.

Candle mould and coffee-grinder from the Misses Allan

Framed engraving—Estate of Mrs. Restcom Manchester.

Silhouette of Joseph Wanton Hazard—from Mrs. Edward A. Sherman.

It is planned to open the House each week-day after-

noon during the summer and to hold loan exhibitions of small antiques each week. Mrs. George Wilbour and Miss Avis Robinson will again act as hostesses.

As last year season tickets admitting to the House will be available at a cost of \$1.00.

Respectfully submitted,

PEYTON HAZARD,

Secretary of Committee.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Officers of the Newport Historical Society for the year ending May, 1937:

PRESIDENT, STEPHEN B. LUCE

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, STANLEY C. HUGHES

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT, WILLIAM R. HARVEY

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT, WALTER GURNEE DYER

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, MAUD LYMAN STEVENS

TREASURER, CHARLES E. LIVESEY

REC. SECRETARY, LIBRARIAN, EDITH MAY TILLEY

CURATOR OF COINS AND MEDALS, EDWIN P. ROBINSON

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FOR THREE YEARS

MRS. HAROLD BROWN

MISS RUTH B. FRANKLIN

JOHN H. BENSON

MISS PAULINE K. WEAVER

FOR ONE YEAR

MRS. D. P. A. JACOBY

WILLIAM MACLEOD

AUDITOR FOR ONE YEAR, HERBERT L. DYER

MAWDSLEY HOUSE

The old town of Newport, on the Island of Rhode Island, was laid out nearly three hundred years ago. Its two principal streets followed the harbor line,—one at its edge, the other at a convenient distance, on the hill slope above. Where the compact part of the town began, these two were joined by a broad way, known as Queen Street. In like manner, at the distance of about a third of a mile, southerly, a second thoroughfare, wider than common, was known as King Street.

Beyond and near this point were a number of the handsome town-houses of Newport's merchant princes:—the Mallbones, Redwoods and others;—this being generally known as the Court End of the town. All have now disappeared or been converted to modern uses, the solitary exception being the handsome old mansion which stands in dignified isolation at the head of King:—now Franklin Street. Its hip-and-gable roof, elaborate doorway and marble steps and walk (imported for a bride) prepare one for the old-time panelling within, the supposed spy hole, the smoke-room in the attic and other interesting features. Few visitors to Newport fail to note and admire this fine old house, which so typifies the gracious charm of an older day.

The Mawdsley House, as it is usually called, has housed privateer and wealthy merchant, French Marquis, patriot and physician, and appears to have been always cherished as a dignified and comfortable home of its denizens. Built at an uncertain date, its present appearance may well be referred to Captain John Maudsley or Mawdsley. Born in England in 1721, he came to Newport in early manhood and married here in 1747 Sarah Clarke, descendant of one of Rhode Island's early governors, Walter Clarke.

Captain Mawdsley was a man of energy and enterprise, a merchant of irreproachable character, (said to have been commander of a privateer,) and through his extensive commercial affairs acquired a large fortune. He was engaged in many ventures on the sea, and also was concerned in the

refinement of spermaceti, of which Newport at this time had a monopoly, and since in 1770 he was appointed "Inspector of Lighthouses", he may be considered to have been an expert on the subject.

The Captain interested himself in all the affairs of Newport; he aided in the erection of Mason's Hall, where any Royal governor who should pass through the country might be entertained; was churchwarden and vestryman of old Trinity Church and became a Director of the Redwood Library. In 1767 he was elected Governor's Assistant, the highest honor that his townsmen could pay; "Evinced their opinion of him as an upright worthy citizen".

Captain John Mawdsley was "possessed of Ease and Affluence" says a contemporary account. "Hospitality and urbanity marked his steps! The Stranger participated of his bounty and the blessing of the poor rested on his head. No man's table was surrounded with a greater number of friends! No one shared more fully the smiles of adulation."

It is pleasant to picture the beautiful panelled parlor in the old house, gay, beneath the soft gleam of wax candles, with the fine imported gowns of Colonial belles and the velvets and laces of their attendant cavaliers, as Captain Mawdsley and his lady do the honors of the occasion. Down the quaint little flights of steps leading to the ancient kitchen in the rear, must have come many a tray laden with old Madeira, and the delicate small cakes so dear to the hearts of all good housewives.

Newport was at this time a successful and enterprising town, and her solid citizens denied themselves none of the amenities practiced by eighteenth century gentry everywhere. Trade was thriving, friends were social, and the ladies of the little provincial capital have left a tradition of charm and beauty that is still remembered.

Newport's days of prosperity, were now, however, rapidly drawing to a close. The colonies were becoming more and more estranged from the mother country. John Mawdsley seems to have done his best for all parties.—In January 1774, he was one of the "gentlemen of a committee", which included William Ellery, the Signer; Colonel Joseph Wanton; John Collins and Henry Ward, all of them prominent men. This committee was instructed by the Town Meeting to wait on the importers of English goods in the

town, and inform them that no tea might be brought to land, while subject to a duty, since the country had not agreed to any such taxation. That he was willing to act on this committee shows that Captain Mawdsley sympathized with the position of the colonies in this respect, and approved of the "virtuous and steady opposition" which they proposed to this attack upon the liberties of America, as they considered it.

The repeal of the hated Stamp Act was hailed with joy by those who believed it would smooth away all difficulties. On the anniversary of this "glorious event", March 1768, many gentlemen assembled in different parts of the town, spending the day in decent festivities;—among these was Captain Mawdsley, who politely entertained a number of friends, when "the glass circulated in honor to the British and American patriots".

There was but little further cause of rejoicing for the merchant. Revolution drawing near, in 1776 Captain Wallace threatened the town with bombardment. Mawdsley was one of a committee sent to appease the angry Briton with Beef and Beer. He seems to have apprehended real danger, since later during Count d'Estaing's attempt to take the town, when great guns thundered, he had the Oil-house, next his dwelling, in readiness as a place of refuge for his neighbors. One shot actually lodged in the wall above their heads, but without doing damage.

The English occupation of Newport ended in 1779, and most of the Newport Tories accompanied the fleet to New York. John Mawdsley had "determined to continue in the town, and convince his fellow citizens that no just reproach could be thrown upon him;—but through compulsion and necessity was obliged to go", with the rest. As a result his property was ordered confiscated, but in 1783, on petition of divers inhabitants of the State, he was re-instated in citizenship and his lands returned to him.

It was too late, however, for a man over sixty years of age to repair his shattered fortunes. His ships lost, the commerce of Newport at a standstill, it appeared that Captain Mawdsley "was left to the Recollection, without the Fruits, of his wonted Liberality". Still, however, "a sociable and agreeable companion", he lived to the age of seventy-three, encouraged and aided by the Free Masons and the Members

of the Marine Society, whose assistance he had so fully earned, in the days of his prosperity.

During the absence of its owner, the old house entertained a guest of foreign birth, strange indeed to a sober Republican dwelling. This was no other than Francois Jean, Marquis de Chastellux, Chevalier, Major General, and author, all in one. The French allies under Rochambeau established themselves in Newport in July, 1780, and the officers were quartered in the finer houses of the town, among them in that of Captain Mawdsley. It is said that the four best were chosen for those highest in command. The Admiral had Deputy Governor Wanton's fine house in the Point; the General was at William Vernon's; the two "Maréchaux de Camp", respectively, occupied the Mawdsley house and the Governor's mansion in Thames street. One of these has now disappeared;—the other three are, fortunately, still in existence. De Chastellux was an experienced soldier, having served with distinction in Germany in the Seven Years War, and is said to have been, as well, a man of most agreeable character. He was Rochambeau's second in command, sharing the title of "Maréchal de Camp" with Baron de Viomesnil. He accompanied his General in September, 1780, to the Hartford conference with Washington, Lafayette and General Knox, where the plan of a summer campaign was agreed upon. The Chevalier again visited General Washington at his camp in November and was present at the final Weathersfield Conference in May 1781, wherein the French and American leaders finally settled all details of the coming struggle.

Not only was the Marquis a soldier of high rank, he was a man of letters as well, and seems to have known how to keep up the traditions of the house to which he had fallen heir. Dr. Stiles, the President of Yale College, notes, November 9th, 1780, "Dined at Gen. de Chatelux in a splendid manner on 35 dishes. He is a capital literary Character, a Member of the French Academy. He is the Glory of the Army. After dinner the Minister of France, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, with the General came in & socially conversed round the table."

In a letter of this date to Benjamin Franklin he also says "the Chevalier de Chattelux, the second Major General under M. Rochambeau, is a lover of Literature, as well as

everything tending to the Happiness of Society, the Aggrandizmt of Republics”.

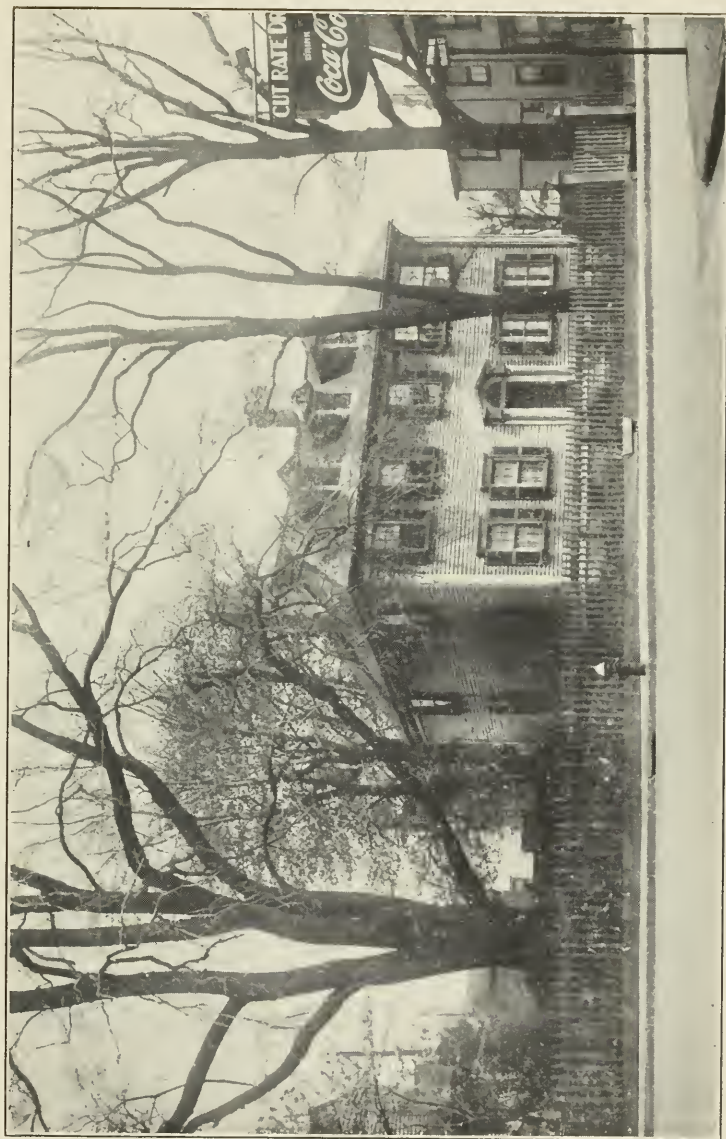
The French erected a defence overlooking the harbor, which they named Fort Chastellux in honor of the Major-General. It has now disappeared, but its site is commemorated by the name Chastellux Avenue given to the highway which runs a little to the West of the position of the old fortification.

As has been said, John Mawdsley returned to Newport and died in 1795. His second wife and but three of his fourteen children survived him. His home now changed hands, being bought by a man, also a leading merchant, whose career parallels that of his predecessor at many points,—though, as the younger by nearly twenty years, he was naturally more inclined to the new than to the old ways.

Caleb Gardner, born in 1739, came of old Newport families on both sides of the house, his mother having been a Carr. Like many another of his time, he followed the sea in his youth, sailing his own ship to China and to the West Indies and making other long voyages. Before he was forty however, he had settled down in his native town, where, engaging in mercantile pursuits, he attained a prominent position.

He was in politics, an ardent Whig, and on the breaking out of the Revolution raised a company. He was assigned with it to Richmond's regiment, becoming in 1776 successively Major and Lieut.-Colonel, in this, the First Regiment in the Colony's Brigade.

Two years later Caleb Gardner performed a daring exploit. The town of Newport was then held and strongly defended by the British forces. Count d'Estaing, of the French Allies, had been sent to attempt the taking of the Island, aided by General Sullivan on land. It was a difficult matter for the French ships to enter the bay where were stationed a number of vessels. A very heavy fog supervened, whereupon Gardner who had noted the position of the squadron from the top of his house, rowed himself under cover of darkness to the vessel of the Admiral and offered to pilot him through a channel familiar to him from boyhood. Taking the helm himself, he successfully accomplished this feat, the other ships following in single file and with all lights extinguished. The immediate result was the de-



MAWDSLEY—GARDNER—WATSON—PITMAN HOUSE



struction by the British of their own vessels to prevent them from falling into the enemy's hands. The siege of Newport was well-nigh lifted; and though a conjunction of circumstances prevented this, it is said that the amateur pilot received both thanks and reward at a later period from the French Government.

On the departure of the British in 1779, Caleb Gardner was one of fifteen who formed a Council of War, under direction of Governor and deputy Governor of the State. During the stay of the French officers in Newport, he acted as a trusted advisor to them, and was also a friend and correspondent of General Washington. When peace was declared, he was given the post of French Consul, which he held till his death in 1806, being also President of a bank, Church Warden of Old Trinity, and head of a volunteer fire department.

During the time of Gardner's tenure of the old house, young people again filled its rooms. Captain Gardner, like his predecessor, had a numerous family;—no less than ten children. His first wife was a daughter of Dr. James Robinson, his second, a Fowler, and the third, whom he married soon after the purchase, was Mary, daughter of Governor John Collins, from whom he presumably inherited the land later owned by the Bateman family, on Ocean Avenue, where the name Collins Beach is still retained. The eldest of the ten was not more than twenty-five years of age when the dwelling came into the possession of the family, and it seems probable that it was Caleb Gardner who imported the handsome marble steps and walk, "in honor of a bride".

One further point remains to be mentioned in connection with this excellent man. Slavery was an established institution in the North throughout the Colonial period, and we are told that the household servants of Newport were both self-respecting and kindly treated. Caleb Gardner had a slave brought from Africa as a boy and named "Newport", who was of remarkable character. A leader among his own people, he became very proficient in music, and a well known teacher of singing. His great desire was to return to his native country as a missionary, and his master, as a step in that direction, gave freedom to him, his wife and children. He actually sailed on his mission, when very old, but did not long survive the voyage. Meanwhile, how-

ever, he had organized a church for those of his race, which, now known as the "Union Congregational Church", still keeps his memory green.

The old house remained in the possession of Caleb Gardner's family till 1827, when it was sold to William Mathew Evans of Philadelphia. He had intended to make his home here, but, changing his plans, disposed of it in 1837.

The estate was now purchased by Dr. Daniel Watson, of the well-known Rhode Island family, and also a descendant of the Narragansett Hazards. This young physician, born in Kingstown, R. I., had been educated at the University of Pennsylvania, married Sarah Gray Cook Arnold, granddaughter of Col. Arnold of East Greenwich (said to have been the second richest man in Rhode Island), and here established himself in practice.

From this time, the Mawdsley House was held by the Watson family for nearly seventy years. Dr. Watson died in 1871, but his widow and children continued to reside in the old house. One son was a paymaster in the Navy during the Civil War; one spent much time on a family estate in Jamestown. The eldest son, William Argyle Watson, was, like his father, a general practitioner. Educated at the same University, he spent his winters in New York, having rooms at the Union League Club, and came to Newport each summer. A man of striking appearance, he was as well, a fine scholar, with a special interest in Shakespeare, from whose works he loved to quote. Emphatically, what would now be called a fashionable physician, he had a large and influential clientele, who appreciated his keen interest in his profession, as well as his agreeable personality.

A member of this family circle has given us a very pleasant picture of the old house, as it appeared, in the 70's, to childish eyes. The hospitable door, never locked, since the slamming of the gate was sufficient notice of the arrival of a visitor; the stately panelled parlor, (which has been called the finest room in Newport), with its old-time mahogany furniture, the Franklin stove, the Doctor's study, with its mingling of medical and Shakespearean works, and its walls adorned with engravings from the master's plays—all convey the impression of a typical Newport house of the better sort. Upstairs, the small room over the front door

reminded one of sailing ship days, with its collection of shells from all parts of the world.

A paved area in the rear, where was found the ice-cold well, and beyond all, the large garden, with its happy mingling of fruit trees, flowers and vegetables, completed the estate, this, as it were, self-contained within its encircling wall.

Beyond that gate, the world passed by;—ladies in Victorias or phaetons, in their fine silks and satins; gentlemen handling the tandem team, with a smart groom perched behind the dogcart. In contrast we hear the old Town Crier still sounding his great copper bell, and calling the loss of a purse or a child, or perhaps the sale of a lot of goods at auction. Old towns do not quite forget their past, even in so brilliant a period as that after the Civil War.

The last owner of this ancient dwelling was Mr. Theophilus Topham Pitman, proprietor of the Newport Daily News, and a former Vice-President of the Newport Historical Society, by whom it was purchased in 1902, after the death of Dr. Watson.

Mr. Pitman was of distinguished Newport ancestry, numbering among his forebears, Governor Arnold, and John Coggeshall, first President of the Colony, Stukely Westcott, and Colonel John Topham, of Revolutionary fame; while his grandfather, Benjamin Pitman, was a master builder, and erected St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church in Marlborough Street. Mr. Pitman came of a family of craftsmen, being great grandson of John Goddard the famous Newport cabinet maker, and inheriting much Goddard furniture. He took great interest in the renovation of the old house, adding a handsome side door, taken from the old John Pitman house across the way, and mantels, in several upstairs rooms, which came from the old Benjamin Pitman house, on Broadway, torn down at about this time.

The Mawdsley house has thus been preserved from the fate that overtakes so many ancient dwellings, in that it has received appreciative treatment through its two hundred or more years of life. It still stands at the head of "King" street, seeming to recall the many gay scenes that it has witnessed; the dignified and comfortable family life that it has sheltered.

We can but hope that it will survive our bustling and

utilitarian age to carry on to future generations one more of those examples of the great skill of our fathers in building, their love for a peaceful and stable home, which have made New England coast towns renowned the country through. Each one different, each one beautiful, our Newport houses stand, and when one is lost to us, we are poorer, and the world is poorer.

Note:-This paper, based on material obtained through the efforts of the staff of the Society, is believed to be substantially correct. In the present state of Newport's Records, it has not been possible fully to check up on all printed information.

BY-LAWS OF THE SOCIETY

Section 1. The name of this Society is the "Newport Historical Society."

OBJECT

Sec. 2. The object of this Society is to discover, procure and preserve whatever may relate to general history, especially to civil, literary and ecclesiastical history of the United States, the State of Rhode Island, more particularly of the City and County of Newport.

MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 3. The Society shall consist of annual, life, sustaining, subscribing, contributing and honorary members. Annual, sustaining, subscribing, contributing and life members may be elected at any meeting of the Society or Directors. Honorary members can be elected only by the Society. Any individual on payment at one time of fifty dollars may be elected a life member, and shall thereafter, be exempt from all assessments or tax. Such other persons as may have rendered service may be elected life members, and be exempt from all assessments or tax. Each member shall have one vote.

OFFICERS

Sec. 4. The officers of the Society shall be elected at the annual meeting (or at an adjournment thereof) and shall hold their respective offices for one year, or until their successors are chosen, and shall be

A President, a First Vice President, a Second Vice President, a Third Vice President, a Treasurer, a Recording Secretary, a Librarian, a Corresponding Secretary, a Curator of Coins and Medals, and Board of Directors, consisting of the above officers and twelve others who shall be elected at the annual meeting, four for three years, four for two years, and four shall be elected each year thereafter.

Sec. 5. The annual meeting of the Society shall be held on the last Tuesday in May in each year, at which meeting a report shall be presented by the President in behalf of the Board of Directors, of all business which they have transacted during the preceding year, and additional reports in full shall be presented by the Treasurer, Librarian, and Curator of Coins and Medals. The Society shall hold regular meetings on the third Monday in August, November, and February, for liter-

ary exercises, the election of new members, and such other business as may be brought before it. Special meetings may be called at any time when deemed necessary by the President, or at the request of three members of the Society.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sec. 6. The government of the Society shall be vested in the Board of Directors, who, shall have custody of all buildings, funds, securities, and collections belonging to the Society; shall fix salaries and have the general control and regulation of the affairs of the Society in the intervals between the annual meetings. They may elect annual and life members, (but not Honorary). They shall provide for regular literary and other exercises; and make the necessary arrangements for promoting the objects of the Society. They shall authorize the disbursements and expenditures of money in the Treasury, and make such investments as may be ordered by these By-laws and by the Society. They shall hold regular meetings at least once in two months. Special meetings may be called when deemed necessary by the President. They shall organize as soon after the annual meeting of the Society as possible and appoint the fol-

lowing committees: a Committee on Finance, a Committee on the Library and Museum; a Committee on Buildings and Grounds; a Committee on Literary Exercises; a Committee on Publications; a Nominating Committee; a Committee on Increase of Membership; an Auditing Committee.

The President of the Society shall act as Chairman of the Board, and the Recording Secretary of the Society shall act as Clerk. They may make such rules and regulations for their own government and for the Society's Library and Museum as may be necessary, not inconsistent with these By-laws. Five members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for business.

Sec. 7. At the annual meeting the Society shall assess a tax upon each sustaining member of ten dollars, upon each annual member of two dollars, upon each subscribing member of five dollars, and upon each contributing member of twenty-five dollars.

PERMANENT FUND

Sec. 8. All money received on account of life members shall be invested and placed to the credit of the Permanent Fund. Other sums may, from time to time, be added to this fund, the interest only of which

can be used for the general purposes of the Society.

QUORUM

Sec. 9. At all meetings of the Society five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

PRESIDENT

Sec. 10. The President, or in his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents (or in their absence a chairman pro tempore) shall preside at all meetings of the Society, and shall have a casting vote. He shall preserve order, subject to an appeal, and at the annual meeting shall present a brief address relative to any of the subjects of the Society or suggestions for its welfare.

TREASURER

Sec. 11. The Treasurer shall receive the annual tax and other income of the Society. He shall be the custodian of all its funds and securities, and shall pay all bills against the Society when properly approved. He shall keep a true account of his receipts and payments, and present a report, in conjunction with the finance committee, at each meeting of the Directors and at the annual meeting of the Society shall present a detailed report for the year in writing.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Sec. 12. The Recording Secretary shall have charge of the seal, charter, by-laws, and records of the Society and act as Secretary to the Board of Directors, and shall keep a fair and accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings. He shall, under the direction of the President, give notice of the time of all meetings of the Society and Board of Directors, and shall prepare a list of such business as is brought to his attention before each meeting of the Directors.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Sec. 13. The Corresponding Secretary shall promptly fill out and send to all members elected notices of their election, and shall conduct for the Society such correspondence as may be required of him by the President, Recording Secretary or Librarian.

LIBRARIAN

Sec. 14. The Librarian shall have the charge and superintendence of the Library and the collections of the Society, and the care and arrangement of the books, manuscripts, and other articles belonging to the Society. He shall expend in the purchase of books and other articles and for their safekeep-

ing and preservation at the direction of the Library Committee such sums of money as shall from time to time, be appropriated for that purpose. He shall present a report at each meeting of the Board of Directors and at the annual meeting a general report to the Society.

Sec. 15. It shall be the duty of each committee to report through its chairman at each meeting of the board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be, ex officio, a member of the Finance Committee, the Librarian of the Library Committee, and the President of the Committee on Literary Exercises.

Sec. 16. In case of any vacancy in the office of President, or of any Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer, or of any

member of the Board of Directors or other officer, the vacancy may be filled by the Board of Directors, and the person elected to fill the vacancy, shall serve until the next annual meeting of the Society when the vacancy shall be filled.

Sec. 17. These BY-LAWS, may be amended by a majority vote of those entitled to vote at any regular or special meeting of the Society, provided notice in writing of the proposed amendment has been given at a previous meeting, or they may be amended by the unanimous vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting, provided notice in writing of the proposed amendment has been given at any previous meeting of said Board.

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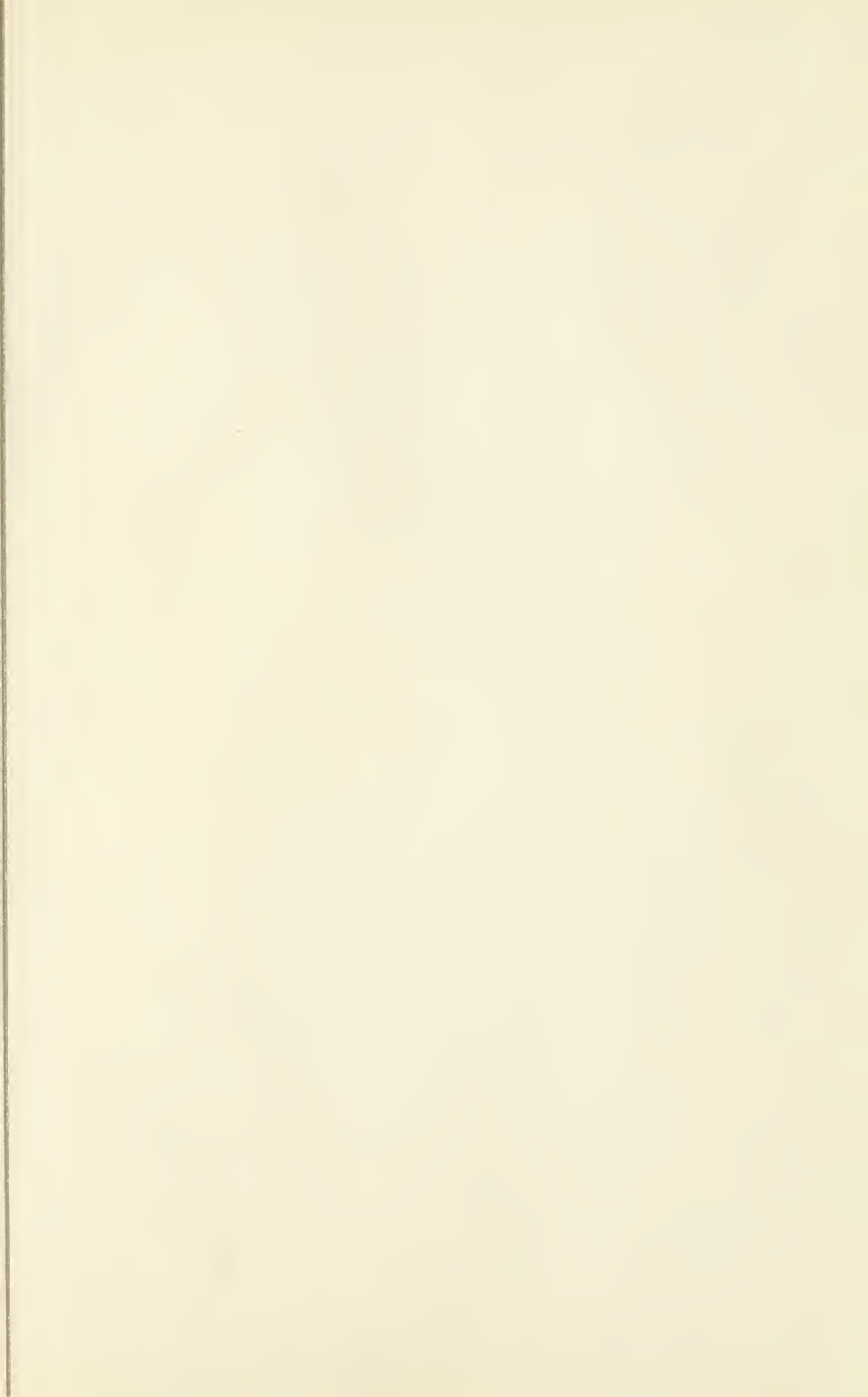
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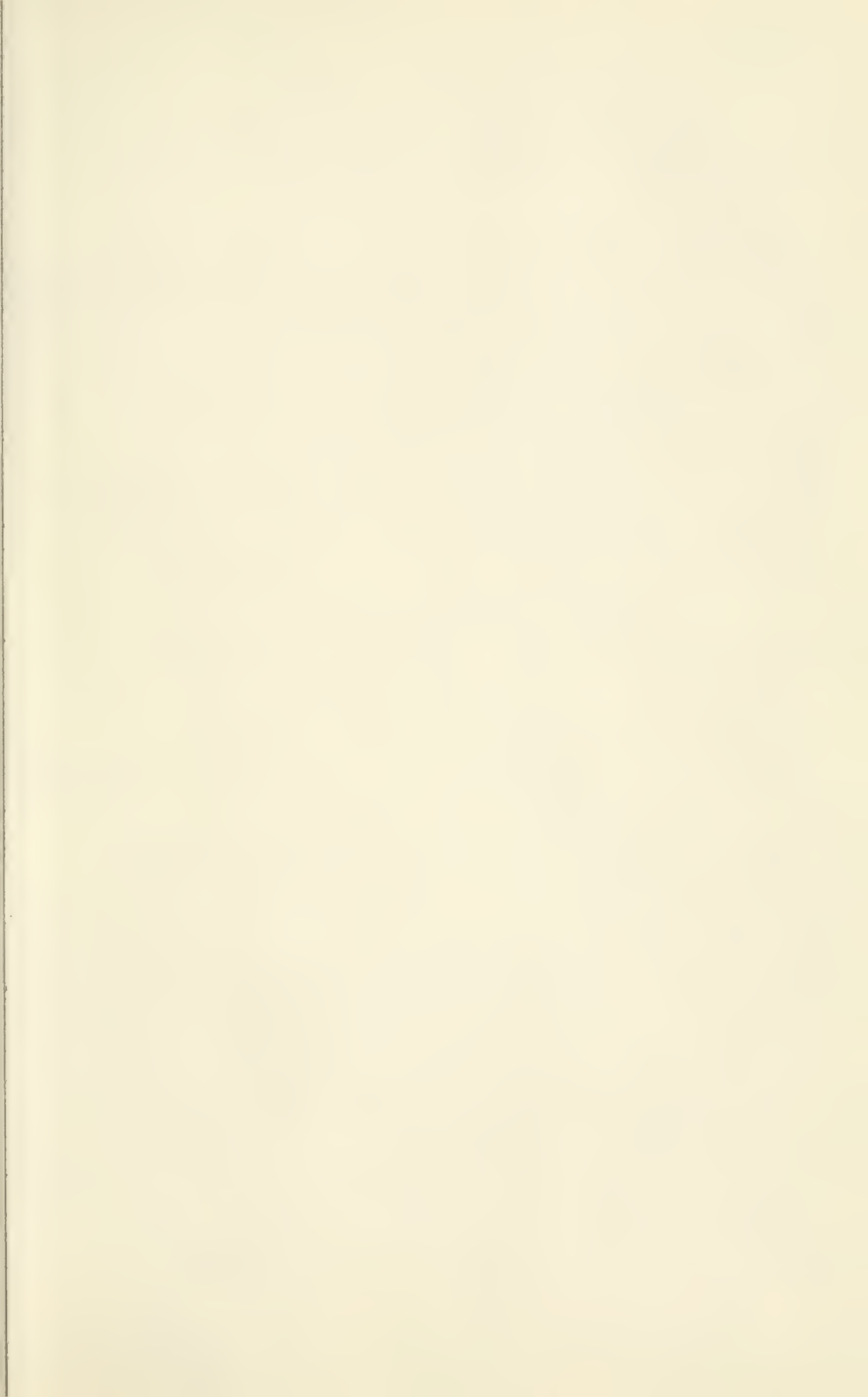
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